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Friday, January 22, 2016

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Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. *Reminder:* Bone-marrow drive scheduled to support Newport School Department employees

As we reported in last week's Field Memo, two employees of the Newport School Department have been diagnosed with a bone-marrow disease and are in urgent need of a bone-marrow transplant. Their friends and colleagues have organized a bone-marrow drive, which will take place on **Monday** (January 25), from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m., at the Pell Elementary School, 35 Dexter St., Newport. Anyone between the ages of 18 and 44 can participate; signing up involves only a quick swab of the cheek. Please consider participating to show your support for their recovery.

2. RIDE to invite high-school teachers to conversation on high-school experience, secondary regulations, graduation

We plan to invite all Rhode Island high-school to join us for a conversation about a new vision for the high-school experience in our state. As you know, the Board of Education has recently adopted our most innovative and collaborative [strategic plan](#) yet. In the spirit of adopting the values and tenets of this strategic plan, we have begun to envision how our secondary-school regulations and high-school graduation requirements can be even more supportive of our vision for successful graduates of our schools.

As high-school teachers are important stakeholders in our work and in the lives of our students, we want to gather their input on our secondary-school regulations and how we can best use the high-school years to prepare all students for success in college and careers. Their perspective is invaluable to us, and we want

high-school teachers to be among the first to weigh in on the path forward. This conversation will include an overview and discussion of our collective vision, targeted questions to capitalize on their unique perspective, and an overview of how we can move our ideas forward together. We will invite high-school teachers to join us on **February 10**, from 4 to 6 p.m., at RIDE, in Room 233.

We look forward to engaging in this conversation with our high-school teachers.

3. Magazine article examines “schools of the future”

U.S. News and World Report this week ran an interesting article, “The Schools of the Future,” about the Summit Public Schools, a group of schools in northern California and Washington State focused on personalized, progress-based learning. These schools serve as good images and examples of some of the work we’re thinking about toward re-imagining our schools and providing multiple pathways to prepare students for graduation and success. Some of this work is already under way in Rhode Island districts and charters, as we can see, for example, in the two new student-designed high schools in Providence. We hope to see more examples of personalized instruction as we move forward this year with the implementation of our strategic plan. The article is posted here:

<http://www.usnews.com/opinion/knowledge-bank/articles/2016-01-19/californias-summit-public-schools-are-the-schools-of-the-future>

4. Award-winning R.I. educators featured in reports from national educational organizations

Two award-winning Rhode Island educators received recognition this week through published interviews with national educational organizations. The Learning First Alliance website features an interview (MP3 audio and transcript) with Alan Tenreiro, Cumberland High School principal and National Principal of the Year. Alan discusses building a culture of high expectations, college preparation, the Common Core, and other education issues. Here is a link:

<http://www.learningfirst.org/principal-year-focuses-college-prep-common-core-skills>

The Milken Family Foundation, on its Milken Educator Awards website, "Connections," this week features an interview with the Rhode Island 2015 Milken Educator Award winner, Kendra Borden. Kendra, an English teacher at Samuel Slater Junior High, in Pawtucket, discusses what led her to leave her career in the insurance industry and to take up a new career as a teacher. Here is a link:

<http://www.milkeneducatorawards.org/connections/articles/view/spotlight-kendra-borden-rhode-island-2015>

Thanks to Alan and Kendra for representing our profession and our state so well on a national stage.

5. District Teacher of the Year blog post discusses 21st-century skills in the elementary-school classroom

The newest featured educator on our website is Nikki Greene, a 3rd-grade teacher in the E.G. Robertson Elementary School and the Warwick District Teacher of the Year. You can read her District Teacher of the Year Blog post, on integrating 21st-century skills

into the elementary-school classroom, on the home page of our website (www.ride.ri.gov) or here:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorRecognition/DistrictTeacherOfTheYear.aspx#DTOYblog>

From RIDE

Standards:

6. *Reminder:* RIDE offers scholarships for Winter Standards Institute on Common Core, deadline is today

The Achievement Network will be offering a Winter Standards Institute on the Common Core standards February 17 through the 20. The institute is an opportunity for a community of practitioners to think deeply about their work, get smarter about research and materials, and confront the challenges of meeting high standards with all students. The institute will provide intensive, content-based learning experiences for teachers and leaders in multiple grade bands in one of three pathways: mathematics, English Language Arts/literacy, and Leadership.

We are offering scholarships to cover the registration costs, (\$1,600) for approximately 25 educators to attend. LEAs and educators will be responsible for travel and lodging costs associated for the travel to Boston. The address, www.standardsinstitutes.org will connect you with more information on this institute to help inform your decision to participate.

The short application will require quick turnaround so that we can make decisions in time for you to register by February 12. We will prioritize providing scholarships to those educators who are

prepared to share the learning and lead instruction within their school or district. Please complete the [Winter Standards Institute Scholarship Application](#) and return it no later than **today** (January 22) to melissa.cabralbraga@ride.ri.gov. Successful applicants will be notified no later than January 29.

Contact Phyllis Lynch (phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov) or Mary Ann Snider (maryann.snider@ride.ri.gov) if you have any questions about the institute or the scholarship.

7. RIDE to offer professional-development sessions on Next Generation Science Standards online modules

RIDE will offer an opportunity to engage LEAs in a Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) facilitator community to implement the *Rhode Island Integrating Practices Science Online Modules* that have been developed through a Math-Science Partnership grant. The purpose of the NGSS Facilitator Community is to support science leaders in LEAs to facilitate a community of practice within their schools using the modules. The topics covered in the series of four modules include the vision of the NGSS, an exploration of each of the three dimensions, an overview of the conceptual shifts, and a walk through curriculum and instructional planning that incorporates the NGSS. The modules can be used by teachers at any grade level to deepen their understanding of the new standards and help them make the instructional shifts called for in an NGSS-aligned classroom.

The modules use a combination of online and face-to-face learning that allows for flexibility in their use. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in discussions with colleagues around NGSS implementation and learn from one another as they lead professional development using the modules with a group of

teachers in their own LEA. The NGSS facilitator community will involve two initial all-day training sessions and four 2-hour sessions that will occur over a 12-week period beginning the first week of March. See the application for specific dates.

Participating LEAs will receive a grant that includes the facilitators stipend of \$1,000 and costs of associated benefits as well as substitute costs for the two all-day training sessions. Click on this link to access the [IP Online Science Modules Facilitator Community LEA](#) application.

The application process will require a quick turnaround, with a deadline of **February 5**. Successful applicants will be notified no later than February 22.

Contact Simone Palmer, at simone.palmer@ride.ri.gov, if you have any questions about the facilitator training or the online modules.

Legal:

8. RIDE issues decisions on residency, transportation

RIDE has issued these three recent Commissioner's Decisions:

A student's move to Coventry to live with grandparents during the school week did not establish school residency there, despite the fact that the student had been the victim of cyberbullying, harassment, and threats of physical harm while attending school in Warwick:

http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2016/001-16_IN_RE_Residency_of_R._Doe-Coventry-Warwick010416.pdf

The Commissioner held that Pawtucket was not required to provide transportation to a student who, despite the availability of transportation to a school close to his residence, elected to transfer to a school within the district that was farther from his residence since the student failed to prove either that the transfer was medically necessary or that there were any “services, programs, or activities” available to him at his new school that were not also available at the district school from which he transferred:

http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2016/002-16_M.M._v._Pawtucket_011416.pdf

The North Kingstown School Department established that the petitioner’s family lived in Warwick, not North Kingstown, and therefore that the petitioner’s children were residents of Warwick for school purposes:

http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2016/003-16A_In_RE_Residency_of_I._Doe-N._Kingstown_S.D.011316.pdf

Data Quality and Collections:

9. Procedure explained for resetting RIDEmap passwords

We have done some analytics on the number of helpdesk tickets being submitted regarding RIDEmap password resets for users and found that these tickets consist of more than 80 percent of

the support tickets. We would like to make users aware that they have the capability to reset their password through RIDEmap once they have set up their self-service questions.

RIDEmap users should follow these steps to update their self-service question in order to reset their password in the future. When you are logged into RIDEmap, you will see your username in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. Click on your username, and then click on “Update User Profile.” You can then choose to either “Update Profile,” “Change Password,” or “Answer Self-Service Questions.”

Selecting “Answer Self-Service Questions” will allow you to choose and answer three security questions. You will be asked one of these questions when you request a password change from the system. You must answer three questions. Answering one question will not allow you to self-reset your password.

If you have any questions about RIDEmap self-service questions, please submit a helpdesk ticket, at:

<https://support.ride.ri.gov/tickets/new>.

10. *Reminder: RIDE distributes, posts resources on PARCC student-data collection*

The names of students and their 2016 PARCC tests have been loaded to the [Pearson Access Next live \(Production\) site](#). LEAs will need to maintain student-registration data within Pearson Access Next, along with submitting students’ Personal Needs data and detailed testing data. To facilitate this effort, a Quick Start Guide, Student Maintenance, Data Checklist, and Timeline documentation have been distributed to data managers and

posted under “resources” in the PARCC Technology community within the Instructional Support System.

11. *Reminder: RIDE urges diligence in ensuring data quality*

Federal, state, and interagency reporting increasingly rely on educational data. The educational data that you submit to RIDE form the foundation of this important information we compile. We organize the data to create relevant and meaningful information that is distributed through government reporting, RIDE systems, and back to you. This information is expected to be timely, accurate, and of high quality.

Please be diligent regarding data quality as we go forward in 2016.

12. *Reminder: Several data collections open, due*

The following are the data-collection deadlines for next month and March:

- February 3: [Textbook Data Collection – Opens](#)
- March 31: [Textbook Data Collection – Due](#)

Information about upcoming data collections can be found on the [data collection calendar](#). Weekly collection [webinars](#) provide details regarding upcoming collections, along with a question-and-answer period.

Finance:

13. Municipal Finance division posts annual salary survey

The Division of Municipal Finance has completed its 26th annual salary survey for municipal government positions. The survey includes salaries for chief executives, 32 various department directors, and other municipal officials. The survey provides data on base salaries (and salary ranges, where applicable), as well as longevity figures for those cities and towns that provide longevity increments.

You can access the survey by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.municipalfinance.ri.gov/documents/resources/SalarySurvey2016.pdf>

Early Learning:

14. RIDE seeking input on Kindergarten Entry Profile through facilitated discussions on February 11

As part of the Rhode Island Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, RIDE is planning to implement several initiatives that will focus on supporting kindergarten instruction, assessment, and transition practices. On **February 11**, we will convene a broad and representative sample of district leader perspectives to guide this work.

A major component of the work is the development and use of a comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP), intended to support teachers and LEAs in better understanding children's development and learning upon entering kindergarten. This profile is designed to provide information to help teachers understand the developmental needs of their pupils in order to tailor instruction, to provide information that can be shared with

parents, and to give us an overall snapshot of how Rhode Island children are doing at kindergarten entry.

As the profile is being developed, it is important to understand the context within which kindergarten teachers are working and to determine how the KEP might be most helpful to them. We are looking for superintendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum directors, and other district leaders who work with kindergarten teachers who are willing to engage in an hour-long facilitated discussion on February 11 about the work that they do and how RIDE can better support this work.

Please RSVP to Miriam Alvarado, at Miriam.alvarado@ride.ri.gov or 222-8184, if you can participate in any one of three sessions:

Thursday, February 11:

- 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., in Warwick, at the [Center for Early Learning Professionals](#)
- 1 to 2 p.m., in Warren, at the [East Bay Educational Collaborative](#)
- 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., in Lincoln at the [Northern Rhode Island Collaborative](#)

15. LEAs invited to participate in technical assistance on implementing the KEP; applications due February 10

The use of a Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) helps teachers to better understand children's knowledge and skills as they begin kindergarten and to collect assessment data that can inform kindergarten instruction. The assessment data can also guide teachers' professional development and affect district- and state-level policy decisions, all in the service of improving outcomes for

children, particularly those with high needs. Successful implementation of the KEP requires developmentally appropriate instruction paired with strong curricula and formative-assessment strategies.

RIDE, as part of the [North Carolina Formative Assessment Consortium](#), has been working to develop and pilot a KEP. As we continue to pilot the KEP in several districts across the state, we are seeking additional LEAs interested in helping us better understand the systems and supports needed to successfully implement the KEP. We have signed a contract with a vendor to provide technical assistance to participating LEAs in order to evaluate current systems and supports and develop plans to improve the alignment of kindergarten curriculum, instruction, and assessment with developmentally appropriate practices, enhance current Pre-K transition practices, and prepare teachers to implement the KEP. This work will be conducted from March through October.

Interested LEAs are welcome apply to participate in this technical-assistance project. You can find more information and application materials here:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/EarlyChildhoodAssessment.aspx>.

Applications are due **February 10**.

From the U.S. Department of Education

16. Acting Education Secretary King discusses ESSA

In the days following the State of the Union address, Cabinet officials embarked on road tours to engage Americans. Acting Education Secretary John B. King, Jr., kicked-off his [“Opportunity Across America” tour](#) in El Paso, Texas, joining a roundtable discussion on implementing the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA). Afterward, the Acting Secretary participated in a [Facebook chat](#). The White House also released an [ESSA fact sheet](#), highlighting how the ESSA will build on progress made since the beginning of the Obama Administration to ensure every student – regardless of race, income, disability, or Zip code – is prepared to succeed in school and life.

17. Library of Congress offers summer programs for educators

The Library of Congress is accepting applications for its [week-long summer programs for K-12 educators](#) through **February 29**. Held at the Library, the professional development provides educators with tools and resources to effectively integrate primary sources into classroom teaching – with a strong emphasis on student engagement, critical thinking, and construction of knowledge.

18. Science and Engineering Festive to be held in Washington in April

The [USA Science and Engineering Festival](#), featuring more than 1,000 corporations and organizations and more than 3,000 hands-on exhibits and stage shows, will take place April 16 and 17 in Washington, D.C. And, once again, the festival will feature several contests for K-12 students.

From other organizations

19. No-cost professional development offered to educators on helping military children

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) will host a no-cost training opportunity for Rhode Island educators, entitled “Helping Military Children Discover Their S.P.A.R.C. (Strength, Potential, Aspirations, Resourcefulness, Confidence) Institute,” on March 9, in Newport. This one-day training provides participants with the knowledge needed to prepare young people to develop hardiness skills to help them meet personal and professional goals through identification of their sparks and interests while developing a growth mindset. The curriculum offers 6 classroom or clock hours of Continuing Education Units (CEU)-applicable training. MCEC is accredited by multiple organizations, including the International Association for Continuing Education and Training and the National Board for Certified Counselors.

Registration is required: Visit [MCEC website's training registration portal](http://www.militarychild.org/professionals/programs/helping-military-children-discover-their-s.p.a.r.c) or email myriam.virella@militarychild.org with your name, email, phone number, and position title.

Meeting Location: Officers' Club, NAVSTA Newport, 95 Perry Road.

Learn more about this professional development at:

<http://www.militarychild.org/professionals/programs/helping-military-children-discover-their-s.p.a.r.c>

20. Training offered to educators on preventing dating violence

The Lindsay Ann Burke Memorial Fund (LABMF) is offering a “Dating Violence Training” for school staff on **March 31**. The training will be held in the library of Park View Middle School, in

Cranston, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. The instructor will be Ann Burke, M.Ed (retired health teacher and President of LABMF). There is no cost for this training, but space is limited and pre-registration is required. Kindly pre-register asap via email to: annburke@labmf.org.

21. College for Every Student to select 4 schools for awards to help underserved students become college, career ready

College For Every Student (CFES) has received funding for *Closing the Gap* program awards: a three-year school program to help underserved students become college- and career-ready.

CFES will select four middle schools or high schools for *Closing the Gap* program awards as part of our commitment to helping 1 million more low-income students attain college degrees by 2025. Information on the College For Every Student *Closing the Gap* program awards can be found on [our website](#). Interested schools should complete the application by **March 1**.

College For Every Student (CFES) is a nonprofit organization committed to helping underserved students get to and through college, ready to enter the 21st-century workforce. CFES currently supports 25,000 students in 200 rural and urban K-12 schools in 30 states and Ireland by providing a framework that allows schools to customize the implementation of three core practices (Mentoring, Leadership Through Service, and Pathways) proven to help students develop Essential Skills for college success and 21st-century job readiness.

22. Scholarship available for students having disability, application deadline March 25

The Catherine T. Murray Memorial Scholarship is now accepting applications for its scholarship that was established in 1995 by Catherine T. Murray. Catherine was a board member and a valued volunteer at the Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) who wished to support the philosophy and spirit of OSCIL through a scholarship that would facilitate access to education for persons having disability.

Selection Criteria:

Qualified applicants for this \$1,000 scholarship must be Rhode Island residents with significant disability and seeking financial assistance to attend college or technical school. This can include enrollment in an academic, trade, or vocational program. This scholarship can be used for the attainment of assistive or adaptive equipment or device to access such educational opportunity. Preference is based on merit, economic need, and educational goals. Applicants will be screened by the Scholarship Advisory Committee. OSCIL Board, staff, and their families are excluded.

Applications are available on our website, at www.oscil.org, or can be requested by sending an email to cmckenna@oscil.org or by calling 738-1013 extension 20. Completed applications can be faxed to 738-1083, emailed to cmckenna@oscil.org, or mailed to:

Catherine T. Murray Memorial Scholarship
c/o OSCIL
1944 Warwick Avenue
Warwick, R.I. 02889
Attn: C. McKenna

Applications must be postmarked by **March 25**. Incomplete applications will not be considered. The Scholarship Advisory Committee will meet and make a decision by mid-April. Applicants will be notified of their decision by email.

If you have any questions concerning the application process, please contact Carol McKenna by email at cmckenna@oscil.org or by calling 738-1013 extension 20.

23. Students invited to participate in Clean Tech Competition

The *Clean Tech Competition* is an international research and design challenge for 15- to 18-year-old pre-university students. This is a prestigious educational opportunity for students across the world that challenges students to be innovative while encouraging their passion for the sciences, and we want to invite the students of your school to participate in this year's competition.

Competition Information

Each year, the *Clean Tech Competition* encourages scientific understanding of real-world issues and the integration of environmentally responsible energy sources.

The 2016 Challenge, ["Making an Impact,"](#) asks students to develop a clean technology solution to the problems associated with plastics or the need for clean, cheap energy. Teams consist of 1 to 3 students, assisted by a Team Leader (i.e. parent, teacher, or mentor), to develop a written proposal.

There is no entry fee. Online registration is open now!

First Round [Paper Submissions](#) are due **March 18**.

10 finalist teams are selected, given a \$200 stipend and matched with a mentor to help them prepare a [Prototype and presentation](#) for the Finalist Event.

Finalists compete for the \$10,000 grand [prize](#) and “Continued Mentorship.” The final event happens on a cruise from Miami, Florida, to the Dominican Republic!

Official competition website: www.cleantechcompetition.org

How can your students get involved?

To help bring the Clean Tech Competition to your students, we ask that you share information about this opportunity with your school’s students, fellow educators, administrators, and other parents. Feel free to distribute the following informational documents:

- [2016 Competition Flyer](#)
- [How the Clean Tech Competition is an Application of Project-Based Learning](#)
- [2016 Student Outreach Flyer](#)

If you have any questions regarding the competition details, or how to incorporate the competition into your curriculum, please contact us. We look forward to having students from Rhode Island in the Clean Tech Competition this year and in years to come.

And there is something for those teachers, too! This year’s Clean Tech Competition happens on board Fathom’s Cruise Ship, *Adonia* where there will be opportunities for professional development with workshops that include: project-based learning, hands-on science activity ideas and demonstrations, dinosaurs, weather,

STEM questioning techniques, earth science, endangered species, and more. This opportunity for an [educational cruise](#) is open for teachers of any age or grade.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/FieldMemos.aspx>